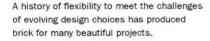
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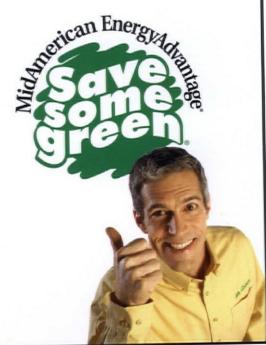
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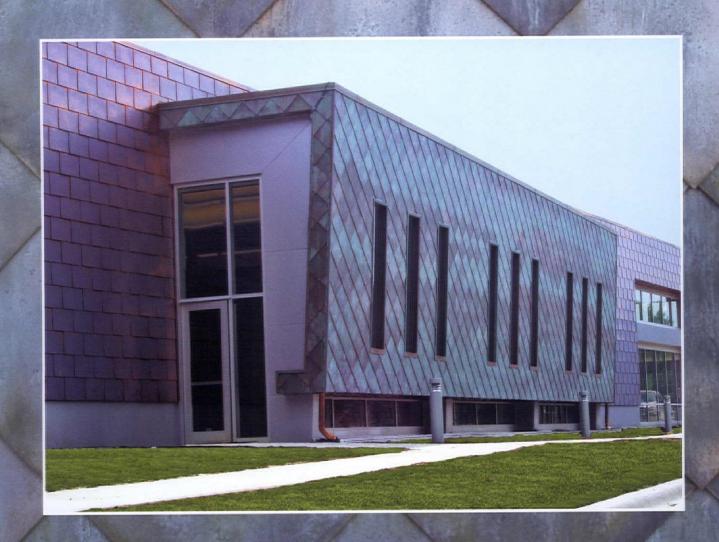
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COVER

Oakwood Road Church/BILD International Headquarters Photographer: Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio ©

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esponsibility is a voluntary act, one that seeks to reach beyond what is required. Architecture affects the interests of others; therefore, we must concern ourselves with our impact on society.

With Modern architecture came an agenda to address the needs of the masses—of the working person. After arriving on North American shores it quickly sloughed off its socio-political awareness and became purely an aesthetic. Some say we have reached a point of final frustration with the current lack of a socio-political agenda in architecture. Infusing our work with environmentally friendly practices can only be the beginning—it can not be enough or will surely be only a trend. Societies are changing at a pace unheard of in the history of human civilization. If architecture is again to move

beyond beauty and economy it must become relevant and meaningful to societies at large

[hopefully, while holding fast to beauty and economy (and durability)].

Ill-conceived projects propagate like cancer all around us...born out of a seemingly unchecked need to 'grow' without regard for the betterment of our built environment...and ultimately human culture. At some point the line will need to be thrown down, "Are we contributing to our world's future or aiding in its destruction?" As architects, we claim responsibility for the built environment; for the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Is your work fulfilling that claimed responsibility?

On a more personal note, my tenure as editor of *Iowa Architect* has come to an end. It has been my distinct pleasure to guide the magazine for the past four years. I have been merely the latest incarnation in a long line of talented individuals who have guided the magazine. My

hope is that my time here has at least kept the bar as high as they placed it. As an editorial board, we have taken steps over the past four years to increase the visibility and relevance of Iowa's great architecture and architects. This magazine represents everything that is great about architecture—the beautiful, necessary, and responsible fulfillment of vision, desire, and need. It is with that goal in mind that I challenge everyone—architects and the general public alike—to continue that quest for progression…that quest for the betterment of Iowa. What better place to start?

Thank you.

Channing E. Swanson, AIA Editor, Iowa Architect



ADVOCACY





Architects ... more than designers of buildings





A Chapter of The American Institute of Architects

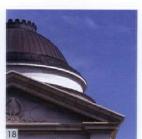
hrough education and professional training architects are ... perceptive listeners, planners, problem solvers, creative thinkers and pragmatic visionaries who, as advocates for their clients, are facilitators of a planning and design process focused on place-making and creating better places to live, work and play. As organizers of both internal and external space, architects are responsible for creating a sense of place in the communities they serve.

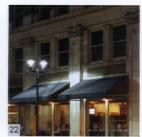
The American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter (AIA Iowa) has established an advocacy platform which supports our societal role and embraces many of the issues important to the economic viability of Iowa as identified in the "Iowa 2010 Plan" promoted by Iowans for a Better Future.

AIA Iowa advocates a holistic approach to the planning, design and construction process; this approach embraces the principles of sustainability to









































create more livable communities. These communities are of the highest quality that will meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Implementing processes that embrace these principles will have a profound effect on the economic, social and cultural viability of Iowa and are strongly supported by the members of AIA Iowa.

AIA members have consistently championed the principles of ...

SUSTAINABILITY

Preserving Iowa's rich natural resources for future generations will require a conscious, holistic approach to integrating energy efficiency, utilizing resources responsibly and creating a symbiotic relationship between the built and natural environments. To accomplish this, we need: 1) new regulations governing project delivery—from planning through construction, 2) the establishment of design and construction requirements to meet an industry-wide acceptable minimum standard of energy, and 3) environmental and land use.

These new standards should apply to all public architecture in Iowa, including all state-owned buildings and public schools, to ensure that all Iowans, present and future, are the benefactors of the socio-economic, cultural and environmental benefits that are gained.

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Well-planned and well-designed communities must: 1) provide a physical environment that promotes inclusiveness and accessibility; 2) offer affordable, appropriate, and accessible housing; 3) provide accessible, affordable, reliable and safe alternative transportation systems; 4) promote business, volunteer and educational opportunities; 5) provide access to key health and support services; and 6) encourage participation in civic, cultural, social and recreational activities.

Within each of these six areas, a livable community strives to maximize people's independence, assure safety and security, promote inclusiveness and provide choice. As a result, extraordinary improvements in the quality of life for all Iowans will be realized and Iowa could be recognized as America's Most Livable State.

QUALITY DESIGN

Design is both a process and a product, which in the context of architecture and the built environment has a significant impact on quality of life issues that touch all of us where we live, work and play. Investment in a well-designed Iowa will benefit all Iowans by attracting new businesses, residents and visitors to Iowa; by creating a positive socio-economic and cultural impact on our communities; and by sustaining economic growth and vitality through environmentally and ecologically sensitive and responsive solutions.

The first step in the design process is the identification, classification and selection of constraints, which then proceeds to the management of those constraints through planning and execution to meet defined expectations, goals and objectives. Quality design requires engagement of the individual users and stakeholders in a holistic, integrated and collaborative approach to the planning and design process to produce quality architecture as the result of informed decision making early in the project development process. Design excellence is the foundation of successful and healthy communities.

What is AIA lowa doing to promote our advocacy positions?

AIA Iowa is collaborating with other agencies and associations representing the myriad of elected officials, appointees and professionals within government, planning, development, design and construction throughout the state of Iowa to help create a win-win for all Iowans.

OUR GOAL: IOWA, AMERICA'S MOST LIVABLE STATE

So how is AIA Iowa going to help achieve this lofty, yet attainable goal? As an organization, we are supporting efforts and legislation that ...

- embrace the principles of green architecture promoting sustainability and the responsible use of our state resources;
- provide for the research and development of alternative and renewable energy sources for use throughout the state;
- allocate income tax credits for historic preservation and rehabilitation;
- create a statewide comprehensive energy code and establish an energy fund providing financial assistance to building owners in the form of grants to help offset the additional costs (design, documentation and commissioning) of the design and construction of state-funded projects that meet minimum criteria for energy efficiency and ecologically responsible design and construction.

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- 1. St. Paul's Episcopol Church
- 2. Eagle Point Park Shelters
- 3. Des Moines Art Center (Meier)
- 4. Old State Capitol Building
- 5. Ruan Center, Banker's Trust Building
- 6. Merchant's National Bank
- 7. Des Moines Convention Center
- 15. Joshua G. Melson House
- 16. Maucker Union Building University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls
- 17. EMC Insurance Building
- 18. State Historical Memorial and Art Building
- 19. Polk County Courthouse
- 20. Des Moines Public Library
- 21. C. Y. Stevens Auditorium
- 29. High School Gymnasium and Auditorium
- 30. Coppola House
- 31. Earl Butler House
- 32. Roosevelt High School
- 33. Lowell Walter House
- 34. Fitch Pharmacy Building
- 35. 801 Grand Building

- 8. A. H. & Theo Blank Performing Arts Center
- 9. Carver Hawkeye Arena
- 10. St. Paul Lutheran Church
- 11. Badgerow Building
- 12. Vogel House
- 13. Civic Center of Greater Des Moines
- 1.4. Union Pacific Railway Bridge Renovation
- 22. Masonic Temple
- 23. City National Bank/Park Inn Hotel
- 24. Des Moines Art Center (Saarinen)
- 25. Agronomy Hall Expansion
- 26. First National Bank Building
- 27. Iowa Advanced Technologies Lab
- 28. American Republic Insurance Building Des Moines
- 36. Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Station
- 37. Des Moines Art Center (Pei)
- 38. Reiman Gardens Conservatory Complex
- 39. Grandview Park Band Shell
- 40. Equitable Building
- 41. Woodbury County Courthouse
- 42. Iowa-Des Moines National Bank Building

ALTERNATIVES BY PETE GOCHÉ

phenomenologicalstaging

SYNTHESIZING THE HUMAN CONTRIBUTION



And now, with calm economy, I await the ghost hour. In this still moment, I am present. Descending from flesh and bone, a mark (nota/maculã) appears.

This mark is humble ... almost silent.

In a delirium of immediate recognition, I study its nuance and am reminded of my childhood tracings while playing in the dirt (humus).

Of thorns and steel and ink, I commit this work to ordinary time to ordinary people to ordinary passage.

Vault°, a site-specific installation by Pete Goché, is an intellectual excavation that seeks to develop an ideological critique of metaphysical existence based on human *sentience*. Developed in the confines of the city receiving vault at Woodland Cemetery, the work was presented to the public on June 9, 2007. Its manifestation is based on the desire to unfold a cultural view of the world through the re-insertion of rite in a long since vacant setting originally constructed for the temporary interment of passed lives.

The city receiving vault was built ca. 1850 and is believed to be Des Moines' oldest standing building. It is located in the southwest corner of the cemetery. The vault served as an on-site morgue where bodies would be stored in the winter until spring when the ground could be manually excavated. The vault sometimes held as many as 100 bodies.

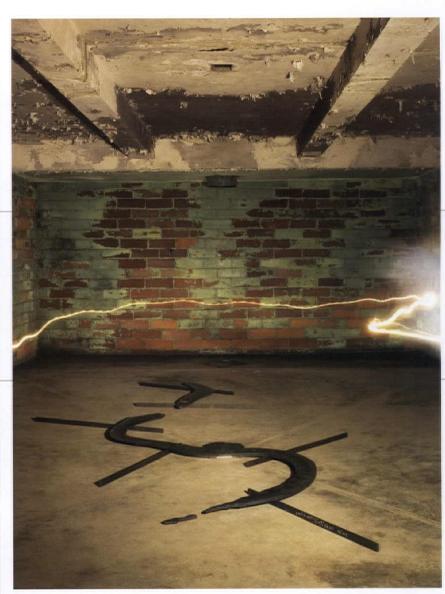
The installation consists of a measure, a *baldachin* and a set of reliquary. The measure, a sinuous arrangement of '1/2" thick steel print plates on '1/2" x 1 1 1/2" steel bar stock blocking, was placed on the floor of the vault proper. The *baldachin*, a bleached muslin cloth (6' by 18'), was placed over the measure bearing a corresponding ink impression. The reliquary, a small box in which thorns are kept, was placed atop a modeling stand. Each of these pieces was accompanied by a white floral wreath and white candles. Occupying the two niches adjacent to the entryway, these particular works stood as memorials to those interred in this facility. This inventory, amidst the decay of its confine, introduces us to a world beyond this world which is nevertheless the deeper reality of the world in which we live in our ordinary experiences.

Essential to this place setting was the accompaniment and arrangement of a performance sequence including an acoustic atonement of the measure, placement of the *baldachin*, the recital of an *incantare* and a requiem ("Vocalise" by Sergei Rachmaninoff) performed by concert violinist Caleb Polashek. In this way, the viewer entered into a full sensory experience and corresponding recognition of self. What remains and is contained as a result, is the collective memory of repeated human celebration specific to this place.

John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: Penquin Putnam, 1980), 195.









PHOTOS BY FARSHID ASSASSI, HON: AIA IOWA, ASSASSI PRODUCTIONS @

Spectacular Vernacular

THE OAKWOOD ROAD CHURCH/BILD HEADQUARTERS IN AMES CARRIES

ON A DIALOGUE WITH ITS DRAMATICALLY CHANGED SITE

Thirteen years after its design won a Progressive Architecture Award, a church and evangelical headquarters finally sees the light of day—only to find its context has changed dramatically.

othic churches often took a century or more to build, so the 13-year saga of the Oakwood Road Church in Ames may seem speedy by comparison. Designed by Michael Underhill, David Heymann, and Laura J. Miller while all three were connected with Iowa State University's Department of Architecture, the church won a Progressive Architecture Award in 1994 for its fresh, provocative reliance on rural vernacular for its forms and materials. In the intervening 13 years, the church's finances slowed progress, the congregation met in rented space on campus, and all three principals moved on to other positions. Ten years after the original design was shelved, two Iowa State architecture alumni who were members of the congregation dusted off the plans and convinced the church to finally build it, and with a few updates the church opened in early 2007.

Underhill recalls that the genesis of the design was rooted in the philosophy of the congregation's members, who were dedicated to biblical teaching and missionary work but who eschewed any rigid traditions; the church is also home to the BILD International, a 'church-planting' organization that focuses on the third world. Pragmatics were thus paramount, as the church needed not only Sunday spaces, but also classrooms and

meeting spaces that could house visiting missionaries and trainees during the week. Iowa's rural architecture had been on Underhill's mind since his involvement with a show of contemporary architecture inspired by 'farmscapes' at Iowa State's Brunnier Art Museum, and he and his team proposed the farm as an appropriate model and metaphor to a skeptical but intrigued client.

Heymann in particular used aerial photographs to suggest a site strategy that borrowed both massing and environmental response from local tradition, with a classic tree break and an L-shaped plan that would shelter a large outdoor space from prairie winds while offering crossventilation during the summer. But the fascination with agricultural precedent also extended to the building's materials, where metal siding offered an economical and referential solution. Underhill researched metal siding extensively, and was impressed with the structural potential of the material, in particular the possibility of using overlaps between sheets as substructure. After experimenting with material from Varco-Pruden, the team realized that with a few subtle shifts in geometry the roof could

adopt forms that spoke more directly to the congregants' aspirations than to local forms. In particular, the education wing became a single wedge, offering a generous main corner entry, while the sanctuary's roof relied on the flexibility of seamed metal sheathing to create a curved, ruled surface, rising to meet the classroom form and presenting a dramatic set of spatial experiences within. Such a complex surface was a challenge to detail using hand methods, but Story Construction, the contractor, reported that the geometry had been correctly calculated and the roof was built to precise tolerances. This pair of expressive gestures in an otherwise conscientiously simple building adds a sense of importance-monumentality, even-to the church, and reflects the ideal of engaging economy that defined the design's approach.

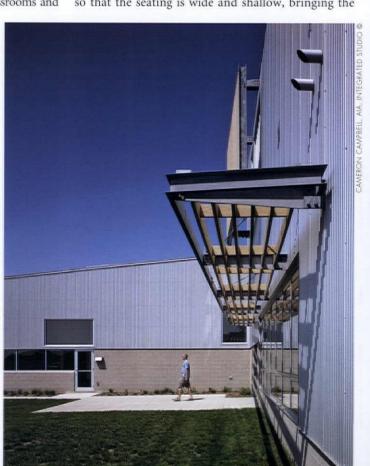
The sanctuary attracted criticism from the Progressive Architecture Awards jury for its lack of processional space, but Underhill notes that this was precisely in line with the church's philosophy; the space is used for a wide variety of functions and the formality of a traditional sanctuary would have seemed intimidating and pretentious given the church's emphasis on inclusion and daily work. The space is organized so that the seating is wide and shallow, bringing the

Right: Metal siding played an important role in the development of an exterior language and in the achievement of the church's sloped and curving roof surfaces.

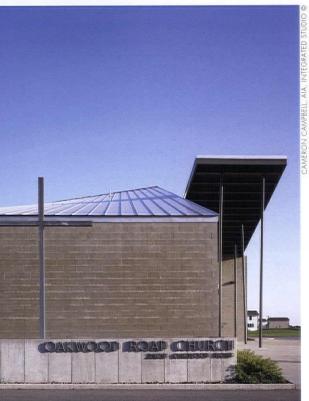
Project: Oakwood Road Church/BILD International Headquarters Location: Ames, lowa Architect: Michael Underhill Designers: David Heymann and Laura Miller General Contractor: Welker Construction Company Civil Engineer: Fox Engineering Mechanical Engineer: Brewer **Engineering Consultants** Structural Engineer: James W. Wilson, P.E. Landscape Architect: Steve Galegor Photographer: Cameron Campbell,

THOMAS LESLIE

AIA, Integrated Studio ©





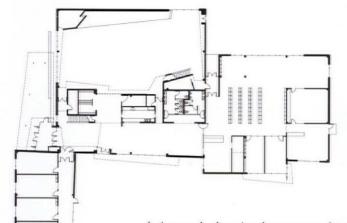


congregation closer to the front and intentionally eliminating the distance—and distinction—between attendees and officiants. Inside, the finishes contrast with the agricultural exterior. Aalto's churches became a common point of discussion (a good fit for the region's Northern heritage), and Underhill recalls that the client team was convinced that this type of modern approach—soft, warm-toned and carefully drenched in exterior light—supported their preferences for simple but inspiring space.

The resulting building is a provocative but ultimately comforting blend of familiar and challenging forms, materials, and spaces. Nothing about the church is fanciful or excessive, yet the spaces' generous proportions and the careful detailing throughout exude calm and inspiration, echoing the client's quiet exhortations to spread teaching and service. Interestingly, the formerly rural site that provided such direct inspiration is now decidedly suburban—at least, as suburban as Ames can be—and Underhill reports that the congregation is now considering an expansion plan that would enclose the courtyard formed by the "L" shaped plan, providing a separation from encroaching subdivisions that had formerly presented an almost infinite prospect of Iowa landscape.

A lot can change in 13 years, but the original design for the Oakwood Road Church appears fresh today despite the elapsed time. Underhill gently suggests that this may be because the church was among the first Above: The church's main entrance is also the front door for its international outreach center; throughout there is an emphasis on forms and spaces that can serve dual purposes, sometimes spiritual and sometimes simply functional.

Left: Humble materials, many borrowed from local farmscapes, are assembled thoughtfully into a welcoming but rich architectural composition.



Left: Underhill, Miller, and Heymann strove for a simple plan, based on the windbreaks and climate response of nearby farms but developed to accommodate a complex set of meeting, educational, and service spaces.

Below: The church's main sanctuary doubles as a meeting hall and dining room. Its soft palette and use of daylight refers to precedents in Adlto's churches in particular.

designs to look seriously at vernacular precedents at a tectonic, rather than simply a formal level. He recalls driving visiting lecturers from Des Moines' airport to Ames via gravel roads, showing them metal corn cribs and Butler buildings and finding architects ranging from Tod Williams to Stanley Saitowitz to be utterly fascinated by the straightforwardness and direct expression of these building's construction. "Eventually I just brought along a Butler catalogue in the truck and every one of them took a copy," he remembers. The Oakwood Road Church was thus on the leading edge of a widespread interest in rejecting the formal gymnastics of the early 1990s and focusing instead on the inherent experiential meanings of simple materials, carefully considered and assembled. It shares this interest in construction and tectonic engagement with Ames' other Progressive Architecture Award winner-Ray Crites' 1966 McFarland Clinic Building.

All three principals have continued their academic and professional careers elsewhere—Underhill at Arizona State, Miller at Harvard, and Heymann at Texas (where he has achieved notoriety as the architect of the so-called "Western White House" in Crawford). The church thus also stands as a marker of a unique collaborative moment, made more poignant by being among the last works of local engineer Jim Wilson, who Underhill credits with much of the building's technical achievement.

—Thomas Leslie, AIA, is an associate professor of architecture at Iowa State University and author of the recently published Iowa State Fair: Country Comes to Town.





A Culture Served

A NEIGHBORHOOD EVOLVES AND THE ECONOMY REVITALIZES

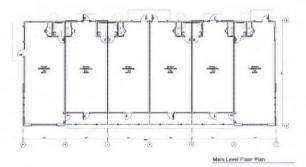
The La Plaza on Grand Avenue in Des Moines seeks to generate retail stability for Hispanic and Latino residents and economic movement in the area. o defend the underlying structure that connects a milieu to its occupants is our function as a generation in the roots of architecture. It has long since been the case with our democracy and varied ethnic heritage. Such was the goal of Jeffrey Morgan Architecture Studio in concert with the Neighborhood Development Corporation (NDC), in Des Moines' east side for the East Grand "La Plaza" District project.

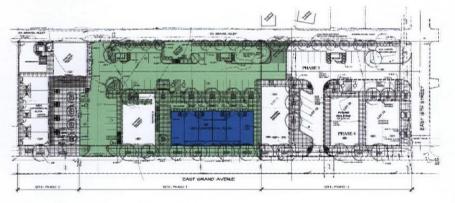
The NDC, financed through an agreement with the City of Des Moines, was established in 1999 and has connections to a wide variety of rehabilitation projects, a

Right: Main level floor plan of La Plaza.

Below: Site plan of La Plaza and future proposed buildings.

Below right: Aerial illustration of building complex and La Plaza. Plan takes into consideration future buildings planned at the site.





combined mission of retail and housing and ongoing supervision of commercial development projects like the La Plaza development. The NDC's relationship with JMAStudio began with a common interest in urban revitalization, which evolved from Morgan's volunteer involvement on the board to a professional service relationship and work on projects in Des Moines areas in Sherman Hill, River Bend and the East Grand Commercial Corridor.

The East Grand Commercial Building sits central to the issue of connection of a space to those who will occupy it as the La Plaza development in Des Moines' east side Latino/Hispanic district. Situated along one of the city's main thoroughfares, this modest retail building stands as a bookend to this culture's civic place. With its six-bay configuration, the building offers the local community an additional 4,200 square feet of retail/commercial space and plaza with prospective tenants to include a realty office, clothing store and newsstands.

The front façade of La Plaza is distinguished from other buildings by the inclusion of a south-facing covered area adjoining the various entrances to the building. This space acts much like a colonnade and is articulated using building materials common to the local region. This palette includes rough-hewn wood columns, a dimensional lumber overhead carriage and corrugated metal roofing. Stemming from close observation of the pedestrians along this corridor, this semi-protected space offers the passersby and destination users an opportunity to engage each other on a more regular basis.

Equally, the rear of the development includes a plaza that is thought to activate the development and draw on typical street activity of the multiple temporary venders that ordinarily station themselves along the corridor. The plaza consists of four rain gardens set into a precise grid of concrete pavers. This plaza is framed by multiple swamp white oak trees, which provide additional shading and screening between the on-site parking and the rear of the building.

Project: East Grand
"La Plaza" District
Location: Des Moines, IA

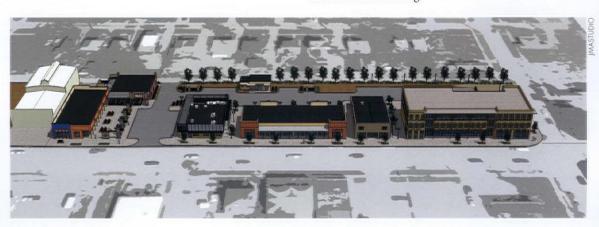
Architect: Jeffrey Morgan Architecture Studio Civil Engineer: Civil

Engineering Consultants

Structural Engineer: Charles
Saul Engineering

Photographers: Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio © and JMAStudio

M. MONICA GILLEN





The design process was influenced by research and travel, which then guided the project's development. Travel destinations included the American Southwest and small towns and villages in Costa Rica.

According to Matt Coen of JMAStudio, the process was about defining the needs and deficiencies of this culturally diverse neighborhood and filling those gaps with affordable and attractive facilities that would encourage growth and community pride.

An important aspect of the project was to address the cultural issues of the Hispanic people. The interaction between individuals who visited existing buildings on the site translated to the need for the semi-protected outdoor space. The result encourages this socialization. All of the new buildings have incorporated colonnades to serve this function.

The influence of this project is less about how poetic the materials are and more that the building is a destination in the community where the visitors, passersby and occupants have a place to gather and experience common ground.

The American dream is a fundamental motivator for the people of this district. The result of the project goes to revitalization and realization of this goal. Success will be measured on a local level as the spaces fill up and retail activity takes hold. Other projects are in the planning stages and speculation of the success of these future projects may be determined by the success of the La Plaza project. If this plan can draw in private developers to the area, then another goal has been met. Since the NDC is financed by the city of Des Moines, private developers may wait in the wings and observe until success is proven certain.

Other building rehabilitation and construction is planned for this district in the coming years. JMAStudio has rehabbed other existing buildings in the same block, including a pergola and tenant improvements to Los Laureles, a neighborhood restaurant.

Two important lessons can be learned from contemporary cultural studies: The group's story should be told from its members' point of view, and the observer should step into the scene wholeheartedly and account for the actual stories of the lives that make up such a culture. A cultivation of this kind is difficult in this case. However, the charge was to create signs of commerce at this geographic site and the work must accept the inherent challenges.

While this project has been generated as a result of a cultural perspective, either known or perceived, of a particular community, it will be encountered/engaged by folks in general and must therefore be understood quite simply as an edifice in time. In addition, the project goals

Above: Street face of La Plaza. Space for six retail outlets is offered.









may well serve as a model for professionals, community activists and state officials to create spatial change particular to the heritage of the people immediately involved. In this way, the work of JMAStudio could be considered honest in its attempt to be democratic by virtue of citation with regard to the specificity of its end users and their customary distinction. Efforts such as this are their own reward given the pleasures of coming to know the ethnic makeup of a community.

La Plaza will serve the Hispanic and Latino communities and the community at large by merging the two-fold needs of the area: An evolving new place to commune for residents, visitors and passersby and a revitalization of the area economy. Above left: La Plaza building along Grand Avenue before additional buildings are added to the streetscape.

Above right: Architect's rendering from the southwest along Grand Avenue.

Above: Rendering from the southeast along Grand Avenue.

Green is Good

A DYNAMIC URBAN PARK CHANGES THE FACE OF DES MOINES

With the development of the Western Gateway Park, Des Moines transformed its city center into a space that draws young and old alike.

park in the middle of downtown: It doesn't seem such a radical idea. The list of successful central-city spaces in America is long and storied, from Central Park in New York City to Boston Common and Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. But 20 years ago in Des Moines, an urban green space was a hurdle blocked by buildings, land ownership, and general disagreement. Did downtown Des Moines need a park? And if so, where—and when? Who would buy the buildings, tear them down, manage it, use it, even?

Fast forward two decades. Des Moines has its urban space—the Western Gateway Park—a swath of 13 acres at the western edge of downtown. It is cleared of buildings, newly planted with grass and shade seedlings, and, in a much-hyped announcement, primed as a spot for the donation of world-class outdoor sculptures by John and Mary Pappajohn. Around it has sprung corporate headquarters and education spaces, along with a host of loft living opportunities. Even 10 years ago, city residents might have had trouble imagining a space for festivals and Frisbee throwing, outdoor movies and splashing in the water. Its effect on the city of

Des Moines—its citizens, its urban structure, even its self-awareness-cannot be overstated.

The idea for an urban park was first tossed around in 1989 by Mario Gandelsonas in proposed plans for revitalizing downtown Des Moines. Over the next 10 years, plans would be proposed and set aside in quick succession, until a 2000 RFP, says William Anderson, FAIA. His firm (now Substance) would eventually win the contract.

Anderson's design team, which included urban planners and landscape architects from Zimmer Gunsul Frasca and Dunbar Jones, began with a concept plan and no budget for a park that hoped to include such varied diversions as a full-length water feature, hardscape, and arbor. Over 200 meetings were held with focus groups, individuals, com-

area in the center of the space; it was removed due to budget constraints. The rest of the park will continue to transform as trees mature and programming continues.

panies, and department heads in order to provide enough input to create a steering committee. Throughout concept and schematic phases, that committee would represent all those stakeholders. Three park ideas were eventually presented, which allowed for further comment and response. "It really was an evolutionary process and very collaborative," Anderson says.

While the process was definitely collaborative, it was not without debate. The business sector in particular was divided on how to develop the park. "Some wanted it more dense, while some people didn't want any buildings," Anderson says.

The finished footprint of the park stretches from 10th Street to the eastern edge of the Meredith Corporation campus on 17th Street, but 10 years ago, a number of buildings still stood on various stretches of the property. Gradually, the city purchased and tore down all but two: the Arlington-Hallett and the Masonic Temple.

Saving the two structures was not without heated debate. Some favored residential units (such as the Arlington-Hallett) in the park, while others believed any building would break the open stretch of space into two fractured parks. The Masonic Temple, too, would prove

Project: Western Gateway Park Location: Des Moines, IA Architect: Substance (with Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership) General Contractor: Larson & Larson Construction Civil Engineer: Synder & Associates Electrical Contractor: CES Electric **Electrical/Mechanical Engineer:** KJWW Engineering Structural Consultant: KJWW Engineering Landscape Architect: Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership/ Dunbar Jones Inc. Fountain Engineer: Hydro **Dramatics**

Right: The initial plan included a hardscape



Photographers: Farshid Assassi,

Productions @ and Brad Hartman,

Hon. AIA Iowa, Assassi

AIA, Substance





Above: Looking from the west, the park provides a view to the Pappajohn Higher **Education Center and the** downtown Des Moines Public Library. This fall, sculpture donations from the Pappajohn family will again provide the next evolution in the park's continuing development.

contentious, but in the end both structures remain, one at the eastern end, one in the middle of the park.

Abutting the Masonic Temple is the Des Moines Public Library, designed by David Chipperfield. Sidewalks from its gleaming façade lead to another new building at the northern axis of the park, the Pappajohn Higher Education Center. Those two spaces fit neatly into the original theme of the park-lifelong learningand attract a core group downtown-students, families-that may have not thought of including a trip to the city center in their daily plans. Now, there is constant traffic in, around, and through the park, with downtown workers, teenagers, and young children.

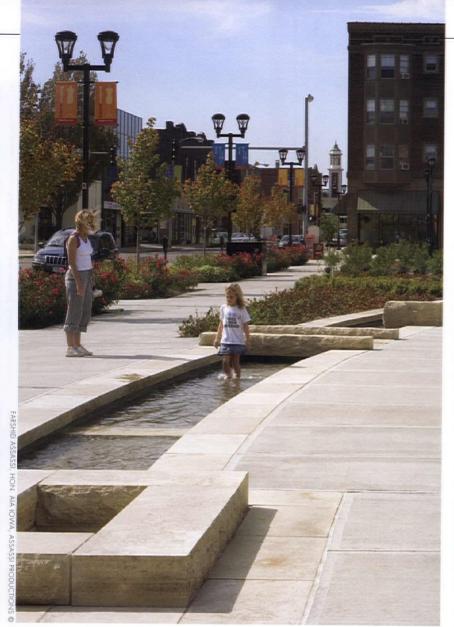
The original park plan called for spaces that, due to budget constraints, were eventually cut, including a hardscape and arbor to break up the long walk. While the water feature was retained, plans to run it through the length of the park, terminating in a fountain, were shelved. It only runs through half of the space, but it is a key attraction for visitors.

Designers also struggled with the two streets that intersect the park; both made it tougher to maintain a cohesive feel, says Anderson. To counteract that, the 20-foot-wide streetscape perimeter runs around the park, while a central promenade runs through the middle. The lighting system, benches, and planters are also carried through the entire space to provide a cohesive identity.

Certainly the park has benefited from other developments around the city—the revitalization of Gray's Lake and Fleur Drive, the eventual riverside trail loop. "The park is really what a lot of people experience for the first time when they come into downtown," Anderson says. "It shows that we are proud of our city, that there are things to do."

As with any urban project—or urban landscape for that matter—there is still work to be done. Anderson, for one, would like to see the water feature finally extend to the western edge, with an anchor of some sort that attracts visitors. And while the trees have been planted, it will take 10 to 15 years for them to mature and provide an overstory. "The park is not a static thing, and we need to continue to program the space to give it an identity," Anderson says.

The continuing development of living spaces in and around downtown will draw more people into the park, as a diverse space they'll use day-to-day. But it is the Pappajohn sculpture donation—coming this year—that



Left: Stones allow for seating, but mostly park visitors come to dip their toes in the water. The park's perimeter contains plantings that repeat around the whole space.

Below: Shrubs and native plantings, along with randomly placed stones, fill the interior spaces.



promises to add a true "wow" factor to the space. "It is a premier collection of art, and will make this a world-class sculpture park, on par with any other major collection," says Anderson.

"We've laid down the bones of a good park, and a lot of things can continue to develop and evolve—and we expect it to," he says.

—Kelly Roberson is a freelance writer and editor who lives a mere 10 blocks from the Western Gateway Park. Her children play in the water feature frequently.



Above: At the western edge of the park, Meredith Corporation provides a visual anchor to the stretch of green.

Alternative Energy

SCHOOL BUILDING EMPHASIZES TRADITION WITH A TWIST

rom the first time he visited its former location,

Community members helped design an alternative high school with a traditional layout, but with unusual features that advance the unusual educational agenda.

Below: Administrators wanted the look of Elizabeth Tate Alternative High School to echo the nearby Kirkwood Community College campus. Architects chose brick and other materials similar to the college buildings.

Dwight Dobberstein understood some things would have to be different in the design for Iowa City's new alternative high school. "They didn't have any of the lights on in the rooms," says Dobberstein, AIA. "I asked them about that. They said they wanted a calmer atmosphere." The alternative high school concept was unfamiliar to Dobberstein, a vice president at Neumann Monson Architects of Iowa City. Such programs are designed for students who struggle in traditional classes.

Besides the dim rooms, Dobberstein noticed couches lining many of the classroom walls—and a makeshift kitchen in the hallway. The communal preparation and consumption of meals plays a large role in the school's curriculum, and the old elementary building that housed the program had no adequate kitchen. "They just put tables out in the hall and would make food out there," Dobberstein adds. "It was just a bizarre setup."

Dobberstein's visits—and an unusual design process—led to a building so dynamic that even some traditional high school students are envious. The agenda was clear, Dobberstein says: Administrators did not want students to feel stigmatized for attending an alternative school, which often is regarded as the last resort for those in danger of dropping out. Administrators wanted the building to feel like any other high school, but they also wanted a less institutional feeling. "They wanted it to look like a campus," Dobberstein says. The new school,

named Elizabeth Tate Alternative High School after a local desegregation advocate, is near the Iowa City center of Kirkwood Community College, and administrators wanted an atmosphere that gets students thinking about higher education.

Dobberstein procured wish lists from students, parents and staff in the first of three forums, but the main thing he heard was a desire for community. Special occasions and gatherings at the school are vital, especially for kids who lack strong family support, Dobberstein says. "They wanted to get a place where they could have large gatherings of everybody in the school," Dobberstein says. "They were concerned about losing that."

The audience became the architects at a second forum. The Neumann Monson team made puzzle pieces based on rooms that would be in the building. Dobberstein says the designers put the pieces on a table and said, "You guys figure out the way it should work."

"In the matter of an hour they had the whole thing laid out," he adds.

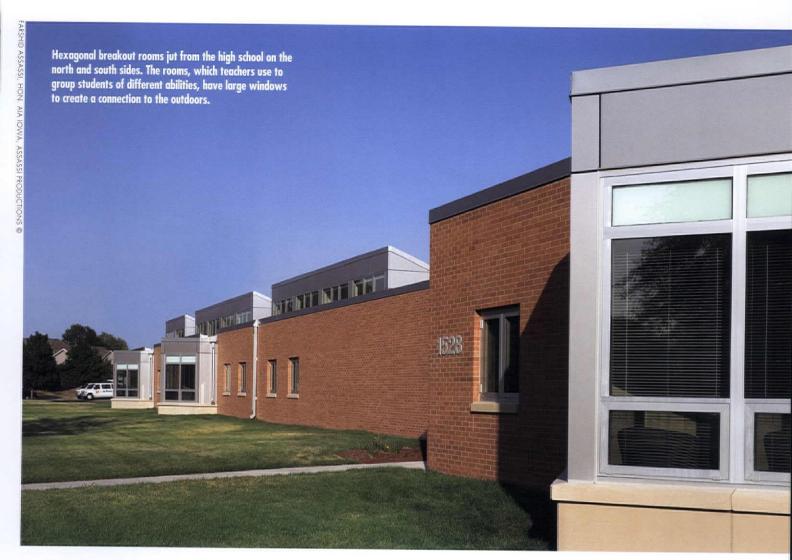
The architects based their design on the community's outline. It's similar to a typical grade school, Dobberstein says, with rooms flanking a long central corridor, but some unusual features make it fit the alternative school mission. The building's core rooms are the commons and adjoining "success center"—a media center and group-learning room. Besides providing resources like computers, the success center gives students a place

Project: Elizabeth Tate Alternative High School Location: Iowa City, IA Architect: Neumann Monson Architects **General Contractor:** Kleiman Construction Mechanical/Electrical Engineer: Farris Engineering Structural Engineer: Neumann Monson Architects Civil Engineer: MMS Consultants, Inc. Interior Designer: Neumann Monson Architects Photographers: Farshid Assassi, Hon. AlA lowa, Assassi Productions © and Neumann



THOMAS B. O'DONNELL

Monson Architects



to relax and study when not in class. That's especially important because many students work part of the day or take classes at other schools, Dobberstein says.

Students eat in the commons, which can be opened to the success center or partitioned off, but the kitchen may be more important. "They don't have a traditional school kitchen," Dobberstein says. "It's more a teaching kitchen or a church kitchen, with a big table where they all gather around and learn the process of preparing food."

Just off the kitchen is another unusual feature: A laundry room for students who don't always

have access to such facilities. There also are showers in the restrooms for students who aren't able to bathe at home.

The commons and success center have walls of south-facing windows that draw in the outdoors. Gardens just outside provide food for meals and study material for biology and botany classes.

Other rooms along the building's south side take further advantage of the outdoor connection. There's an



CLASSROOMS

COMMON USE

ADMINISTRATION

KITCHEN / STORAGE

CIRCULATION

MECHANICAL / MAINTENANCE

Tate is an alternative school, community members and administrators opted for a design similar to a traditional school. The long central corridor gives administrators clear sight



Above: The commons area, foreground, and success center, to the right, can be joined for large events or partitioned for privacy. Students come here between classes, while waiting to attend classes at other schools, or while waiting to head to daytime jobs.

Right: The science lab is flexible to accommodate a broad curriculum. Tables can be pushed into hexagonal shapes or strung together in rows.



art studio where students can draw inspiration from nature, and a pottery room in one of the hexagonal breakout areas included in the plan. Science labs also are along the south side, so students can easily work outside on science projects and nature studies. Here the breakout room holds a botany lab.

Classrooms on the building's north side are used for more traditional subjects, such as English and social studies. Classes often have students with many learning styles and levels of ability, Dobberstein says, so teachers wanted the freedom to break students up into groups. The hexagonal breakout rooms along the north wall give them that flexibility. The classrooms themselves are larger than usual to provide additional options.

The building's most noticeable features—clerestory windows Dobberstein calls "light monitors"—provide the soothing light level he noticed on his early visit to the old school. "That's something we brought in that (the school district and community) hadn't really considered," he adds. "When they talk about light, they want to keep it more subdued. At the same time, we were looking into our ideas for energy savings."

The soft light admitted by the north-facing monitors is "pretty calming and uplifting," Dobberstein says. "I was convinced they should face south because most people like the sunlight streaming-in in the winter. It turns out the glare is too much, and closing them off with shades defeats the whole idea."

Studies also found the light monitors cut energy expenses enough to cover the extra construction costs, despite the added glass and volume. "I had to be convinced myself," Dobberstein says, but the studies found that with insulated glass windows, heat loss was insignificant and the indirect lighting cut electric bills. "It was surprising to me," he adds.

Sensors automatically adjust electric lighting in the rooms to compensate for cloudy days. The school has other energy-efficient features, including a recovery system to extract heat from exhaust air, a geothermal heating system, and overhangs on the south side to shade the commons and success center during sunny seasons.

Reaction has been positive since classes started in August 2005, Dobberstein says. While the faculty and staff have a laid-back attitude, everyone recognizes that the students need a more traditional atmosphere. "Sure, they were looking at pods and putting rooms together," Dobberstein says, but "The school echoed that these kids need a little more structure in their lives, and that's what this provides."

—Thomas R. O'Donnell lives in Urbandale and writes about science, architecture and personal finance.

Below: Rooftop "light monitors" face north to admit soft sunlight, providing a calming and uplifting feel to the large classrooms.



Time Linkage

PREFERRED PATHWAYS REVISITED

The details are details. They make the product. The connections, the connections, the connections. It will in the end be these details that give the product its life.

—Charles Eames

hroughout their remarkable century-defining career, Charles and Ray Eames consistently emphasized the importance of connections in their work. Whether this was a chair's structural elements, their own Case Study House #8, over 85 short films, and the numerous exhibitions and toys created during their 45 years as America's premier design couple, structural and thematic connections always informed the work. This common thread served them well in every project executed by the Eames Office and the resulting products continue to have a lasting impact on architects and designers.

This concept of connections can also be extrapolated to include urban planning and neighborhood revitalization when planners, developers and architects collaborate on the most effective methods of reconnecting neighborhood elements to both one another and adjacent areas in order to craft more humane and livable communities.

For the past few decades, in an effort to counter the negative aspects of urban sprawl and its accompa-

nying pollution, congestion and frayed nerves, many cities have addressed the issue of developing existing infill properties utilizing smart growth concepts close to business and commercial districts. As in any ambitious planning endeavor, these efforts have had their fair share of ups and downs but each is definitely a learning experience.

In the Sherman Hill Historic District of Des Moines, Jeffrey Morgan Architecture Studio, in association with design consultant John Stephens Rice, has designed an infill contextual multifamily project recalling many architectural elements of the surrounding vintage buildings. The Woodland Avenue Brickstone project at 15th and Woodland is on the threshold of this historic neighdistrict establishing a transition between the two areas. As Jeffrey Morgan, AIA, stated, "the project creates connections with Sherman Hill, the downtown district and Western Gateway Park, and encourages pedestrian walking for an urban experience. It also contributes to densifying the urban core and addresses smart growth issues, urban infill, affordable housing and brings life back to neighborhoods."

The personal design catalyst for the project was Morgan's travels to Washington, DC, New York, San Francisco, Chicago and St. Louis to study their classic brownstones, older row house configurations and other types of high density urban housing. According to Morgan, "for some reason, Des Moines missed the row house trend and never had this block after block model as seen in many other cities."

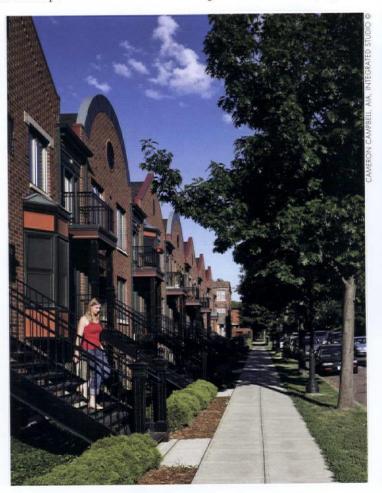
As the project was in a registered historic neighborhood, the new building had to meet the guidelines of the National Park Service. Even though Woodland Avenue Brickstone was completed in 2003, the overall visual sense is of a vintage structure with varying roof

borhood and the downtown business









CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA, INTEGRATED STUDIO @

Right: The interiors by Sonja Roberts of Business Design 1 illustrate a modern aesthetic with simpler materials and an open planning configuration allowing tenants to adapt the units to their specific needs with alternative furniture placement when necessary. Industrial sliding screen walls open or close space and enable varying degrees of quiet and privacy depending on changing living situations.

Right: The 54 units are all slightly different with features of bay windows, balconies and private covered exterior entries. The building materials consist of brick, pre-cast concrete lintels and sills, and double-hung and casement windows with traditional trim detailing in keeping with the architectural nature of the district.



lines, intricate exterior details, and the use of contextual dark brick throughout the project. In addition to this visual sensibility is the close proximity to the tree-lined sidewalk and street—seeming as though the building has existed for decades. These connections and transitions with the building, staircases, sidewalks and street serve to create a deep experience for pedestrians by weaving elements together and developing a sense of community.

By concentrating on how a new building relates to its neighbors, on how the design and details promote interaction, and on how it addresses a very serious planning issue, the architects have proposed an urban plan that should be expanded throughout similar neighborhoods, in order to revitalize often neglected areas and to present a rational model of living for the twenty-first century.

—"I'll tip my hat to the new constitution, take a bow for the new revolution, smile and grin at the change all around." Lyrics from The Who in 1971 still resonate decades later and Mark E. Blunck won't get fooled again by anyone.





Left: The building measures 300 by 55 feet and is situated on three connected land parcels. The structure is split into two sections named The Porter (west) and The Sonja (east) with a separation wall at the zero property line making them inaccessible from one another. The one- and two-bedroom units of 725 and 930 square feet all differ with variations in floor plan and facility placement.

Tower in the Park

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS STUDY THE INTERSECTION OF DESIGN, TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

As part of a required summer course in building technologies, Iowa State University graduate architecture students construct an observation tower for a community group in Des Moines.

ver the past four years the graduate program in architecture at Iowa State has undergone a complete transformation. Under the leadership of Professor Clare Cardinal Pett, the faculty modified the course work into an integrated program of equal five-credit-hour blocks of studio, culture and technologies. This provides the program with a unique method of delivering a balanced approach to architectural studies. Continuing this thinking into the planning of a required first-year summer technologies course, it was determined that the class should connect the students to as many aspects of making a building as possible. This included the typical issues of design/documentation/construction and extended into client and consultant relations, governmental regulations, and a core value of the new graduate program-community service. The course planning became a search for an ideal situation to bring these conditions together.

In 2001 Des Moines Metro BMX partnered with Parks and Recreation to construct a BMX track at Ewing Park on the southeast side of Des Moines. The track project is led by Kitty Weston-Knauer, recently retired principal of the SCAVO high school program in Des Moines and a nationally ranked BMX racer. She employs a tough-love approach that helps troubled kids find their potential. This extends to her involvement in opportunities for children in the community to find healthy activities. Kitty easily attracts volunteers to her endeavors and I had helped plan the original track, which included an announcer's tower. This phase of the project sat dormant for three years and turned out to be the ideal opportunity for the summer course.

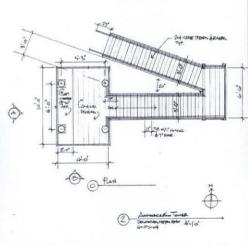
The tower had a preliminary design that was based on a charrette with volunteers from the track. It is a basic scheme with a 7' by 10' platform held aloft 20 feet by four utility poles. The base acts as a large Adirondack chair and the top is a trellis. The students described it as a three level "tea house" which seems an apt description. Moving forward from the existing plan allowed students to focus on issues other than ownership of the design. The concentration of the class was

placed on refinement, assembly, and the task of actually getting something built for a worthy client with minimal resources. Charles Saul Engineering donated structural services and the students were able to interact with Plan and Zoning, Permit and Development, Parks and Recreation, along with local contractor and track director Tim Brose. The result from these exchanges was a learning experience imbued with the urgency of needing to

Right: Assembly details were simple, but attempted to convey a straightforward durable utility. This was thought of as a "working building," much like a farm structure.

Project: BMX Tower
Location: Des Moines, IA
Architect: Substance
Structural Engineer:
Charles Saul Engineering
Photographer: Jason Alread, AIA

JASON ALREAD



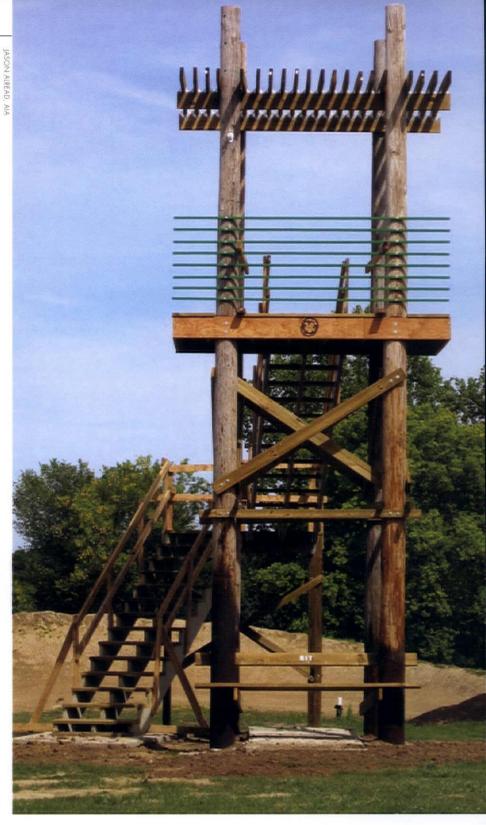
Above: Plan of the tower, a minimal platform held 20 feet in the air.



perform for more than the expectations of course work. The client placed trust directly in the hands of the students and they responded to a larger task than being designers. Once the project had begun they became part of the community and performed beyond the expectations of the class.

Track volunteers came out frequently to assist in construction and the interaction was immensely gratifying. I was aware that we would not completely finish by the end of the course, and waited to see how the students would respond when the project was no longer about a grade and became truly community service. Everyone showed up the day after class in full work gear with no questions asked. Eight students, one faculty and numerous other volunteers completed the project in less than eight weeks for fewer than \$2,500. Iowa State continues to require this summer course, now entitled "Service Learning," and completed the fourth project (prefabricated bus shelters in Sioux City) this summer.

—Jason Alread, AIA, LEED®AP, is a partner in the Des Moines firm of Substance and is an assistant professor at Iowa State University. He is always on the lookout for new service learning opportunities for Iowa State students.



Above left: Rendering by graduate student Kevin Scott of the tower in its final iteration before construction.

Above: The three level "tea house" near the end of construction. The tower acts as both an announcer's platform and an icon for the trac.k.

PORTFOLIO

All Saints Catholic Church—HLKB Architecture

Il Saints Catholic Church, Stuart, Iowa, was constructed in 1908 in what was truly a community effort. Catholics and non-Catholics alike worked together on the monumental project. On August 22, 1995, a lone arsonist set fire to the historic building. Despite the heroic efforts of the Stuart fire department and nearby communities, the church suffered extensive damage.

The project Restore Foundation was formed in 1996 by local residents wishing to see the 90-year-old structure restored. The group intends to renovate the structure for use as a community cultural center. By renovating this structure, Project Restore hopes to save a piece of the cultural history of Stuart, and also to promote understanding among religions.

The project will include the addition of an internal structural system, repair and restoration of the roof and associated items (including dome options), and minor exterior wall restoration. Additional work includes stained glass window restoration, installation of wood floors, and new accessibility elements.







Davenport Police Facility—Neumann Monson Architects





he new two-story police facility in Davenport, Iowa, will be built in two phases on the existing site. Administrative offices will be built on what is now a parking lot. When complete, the existing building will be demolished and an attached parking structure will be built. By utilizing this site the facility will maintain necessary adjacencies to other city and county facilities, creating an improved civic corridor.

The design incorporates many sustainable design initiatives including multiple green roofs and rain gardens to reduce storm water run-off, advanced daylighting techniques and lighting controls, a geothermal system, superior indoor air quality, high recycled content materials, and low flow fixtures (reducing water consumption by 30%).

The result will be a safe and accessible facility, which is convenient to the public and provides a quality workspace for public servants. The environmental sensitivity and responsibility inherent with the building will act as a teaching tool of environmental stewardship and health.

OURNAL

BY CATHERINE THOMAS

3-2-1 lift off!

oticed anything new lately at www.aiaiowa.org? How about the launch of the brand new Web site exhibiting some impressive twenty-first century design? The new Web site is a great improvement with user friendly design and also some serious navigation options. The Web site boasts expanded resource searching capabilities, Career Center (a new feature), improved Calendar of Events with search option, improved Members Only page and also a new look for upcoming communications. Congratulations, AIA Iowa! Greatly appreciated for those of us who can use a little "user friendly" in our lives!

Contemporary pioneers

eptember 14, 2007 through January 2008 Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum will be presenting two exhibitions that showcase two design pioneers working centuries apart. "Piranesi as Designer" will highlight his influence in the reform of architecture as well as his influence in interiors and exquisite furnishings while "Provoking Magic: Lighting of Ingo Maurer" will showcase nearly four decades of work including installations, film, photographs and more. Both will offer comprehensive overviews of their work. Visit www.cooperhewitt.org for more information and images.

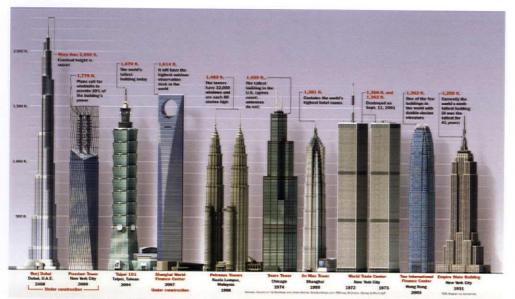




The sky was the limit

uly 21 of this year was the day the world found itself with a new global landmark. Burj Dubai, UAE, has become the tallest building in the world. Surpassing Taipei 101 in Taiwan, Burj Dubai now towers at 1,680 feet and has reached 141 stories—more than any other building in the world. Scheduled for completion in 2008, Burj Dubai can not only boast about its

world record but can also boast an impressive Web site listing all types of information about the building. The building has broken record height, and it also holds some other records for quantities of materials used and technologies to get them to the top. Watch the construction progress through photos and video daily at www.burjdubai.com.



SOURCES: COUNCIL ON TALL BUILDINGS AND URBAN HABITAT, GREATBUILDINGS.COM; PBS.ORG; SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL LLP
TIME DIAGRAM BY JOE LERTOLA

Google this

n April of this year Google Earth published an AIA layer as part of its featured content section. The AIA layer launched with Blueprint for American Mosaic projects and America's Favorite Architecture projects. The layer places a mark on Google Earth that will house information including pictures, links, and information about specific projects. You can also view examples of other layers such as National Geographic or Discovery Network at Google Earth. Contact David Downey (ddowney@aia.org) or Danielle Eugene (deugene@aia.org) for more information.

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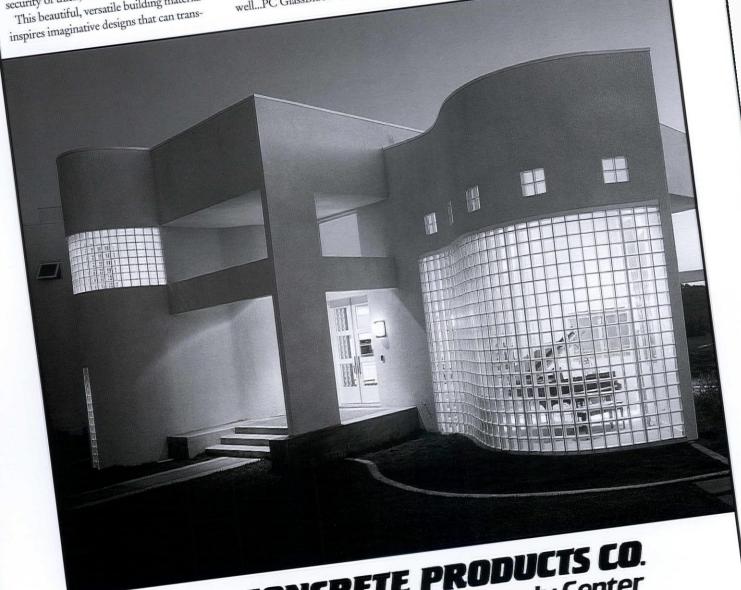
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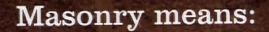


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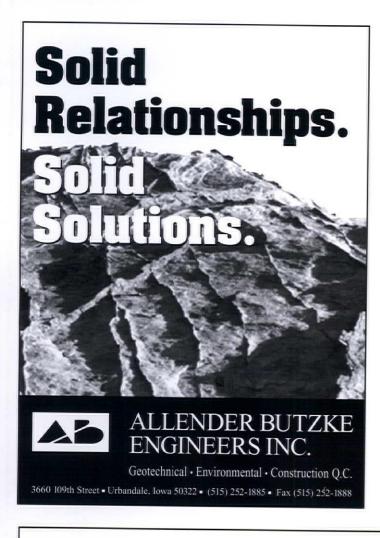
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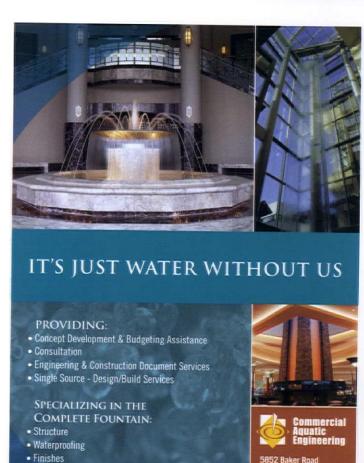
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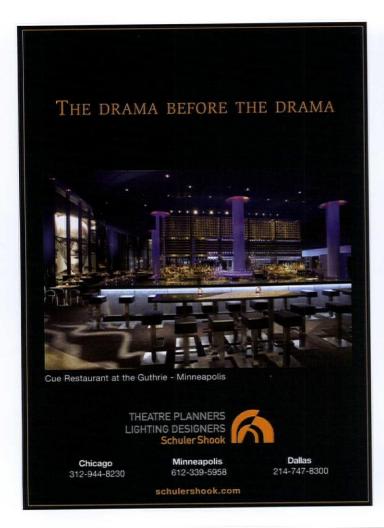
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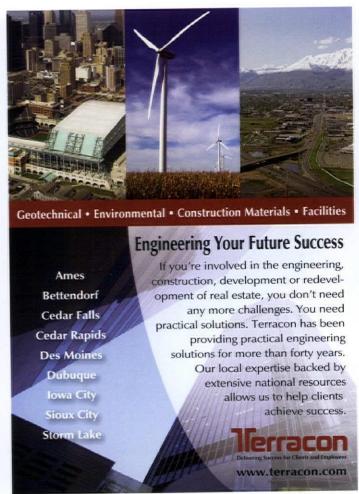


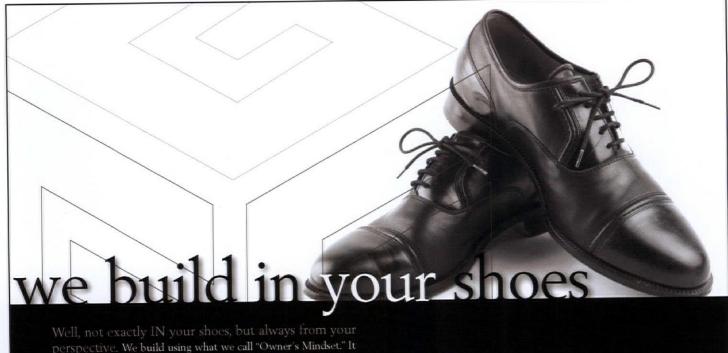
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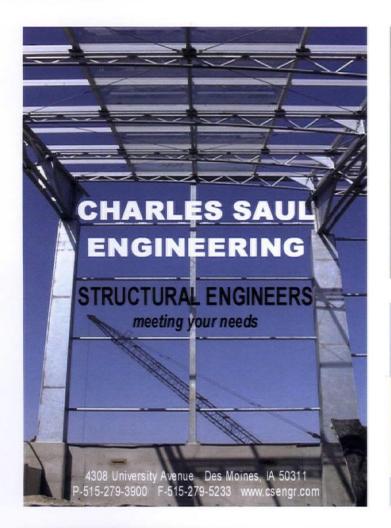
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Convention/Editorial Issue publication date: September 2008

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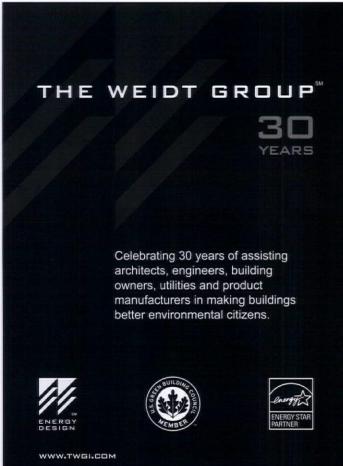
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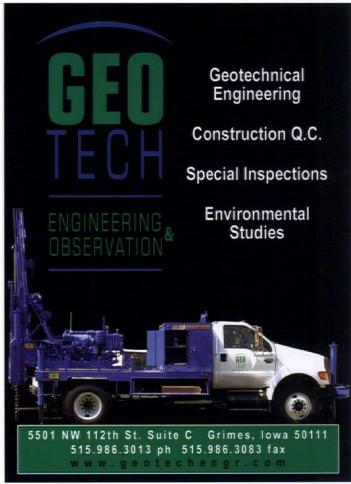
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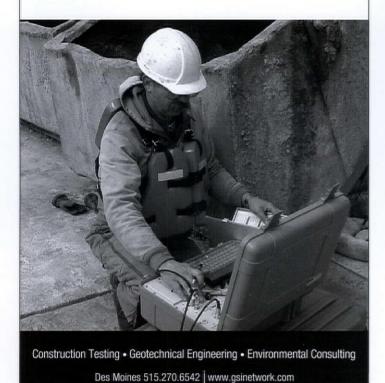
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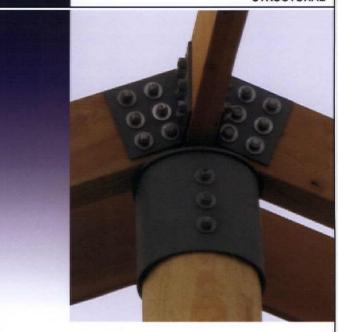


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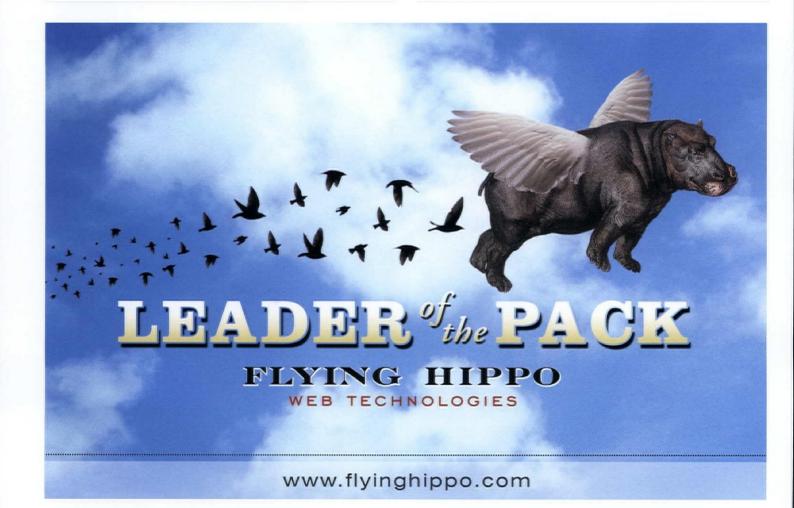


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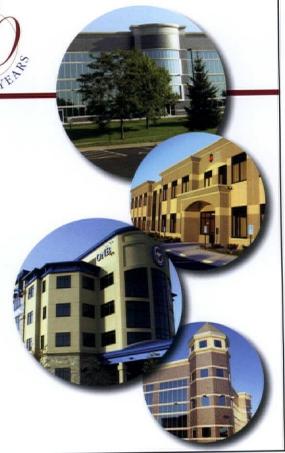
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